

**Annual Report Applied Geography Specialty Group (AGSG)  
Association of American Geographers (AAG)  
April 30, 2009**

1. Mission: The AGSG mission is to advance and improve the performance and execution of professional geographic services in satisfying the requirements and needs of customers and stakeholders in business, government, and non-profits, and others. Services of applied geographers may be for reimbursable payment, given as volunteer service, or presented as research improving applied geography.

AGSG has published Objectives in meeting its mission:

- Increase the visibility of applied geography in the profession and the general population;
- Promote and facilitate communications among members; and,
- Promote and recognize individual excellence in applied geographic research.

2. Dues Information: Individual dues are \$10, but reduced to \$1 for full-time students

3. AGSG Leadership:

3.a. AGSG Officers 2008-09:

- Chair: Dr. Sonya Glavac, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arizona State University
- Vice Chair: Dr. Nairne Cameron, Dept. of Geography and Geology, Algoma University
- Secretary: Ms. Lucy Stanfield, Environmental Protection Agency
- Treasurer: Mr. Dave Clark, University of California Davis and California Department of Transportation
- Past Chair: Mr. Edwin Butterworth

3.b. AGSG Board 2008-09 (A= Academic; WPub=Workforce Public; WPrv=Workforce Private; S= Student, R=Retired) - Vacancies (1 Student Representative):

Mr. Edwin Butterworth (WPrv)  
Ms. Melinda Butterworth, Virginia Tech (S)  
Dr. Nairne Cameron, Algoma University (A)  
Mr. Dave Clark, (WPub)  
Dr. Michael DeMers, New Mexico State University (A)  
Dr. Sonya Glavac, Arizona State University (A)  
Mr. Douglas Heivly, City of Allentown, PA (WPub)  
Mr. Seth Marcus, US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (WPub)  
Ms. Nancy Torrieri, US Census Bureau (WPub)  
Ms. Demetra Voyadgis, Treasurer, Army Engineer Research & Development Center (WPub)  
Dr. Barry Wellar, Wellar Consulting (WPrv)  
Dr. Richard Wright, San Diego State University (A)

### 3.c. Committees and Project Leaders 2008-09:

Anderson Medal Committee: Dr. Barry Wellar

Web Manager: Mr. Seth Marcus

Newsletter Editor: Ms. Melinda Butterworth

Student Competition Project Leader: Ms. Melinda Butterworth

AGSG Emeritus Committee Leader: Dr. Barry Wellar

### 3.d. Future Officer Commitments for 2009-2010:

- Chair: Dr. Nairne Cameron
- Vice Chair: Mr. Dave Clark
- Secretary: Ms. Lucy Stanfield
- Treasurer: Ms. Demetra Voyadgis
- Past Chair: Dr. Sonya Glavac

## 4. Accomplishments:

- a. Member development: The Third Applied Geography Student Paper competition received no submissions. Next year, we will continue with a student competition but we will be revising the competition details and promoting the program more widely and in conjunction with the Applied Geography Conference organization. A second competition will be launched targeted at faculty and graduate teaching assistants for an in-class exercise on a topic related to applied geography.
- b. Communications: Released two editions of the AGSG Newsletter (Fall 2008 and Spring 2009) available on AGSG website at <http://agsg.binghamton.edu/>.
- c. Visibility: Sponsored and co-sponsored 5 sessions at 2009 AAG Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, NV.
- d. Excellence: AGSG Board members continued to provide leadership to the Anderson Medal Committee.
- e. Record: Minutes from 2008 Annual Meeting Attached.
- f. Support to Anderson Medal & AAG Recognition of Professional Excellence.

## 5. Memberships and Participation

As of April 23, 2009, the current AGSG membership is 302 of which 147 are students paying reduced dues and 155 are non-students paying full dues.

## 6. Anderson Award Committee Report (by Dr. Barry Wellar)

A March 21, 2009 communication to the Board outlined Committee activities undertaken in 2008 and planned for 2009. In summary, an offer has been made to involve Anderson medallists in regional conferences as speakers, medalists will be surveyed this Fall for a collection of messages to impart to budding applied geographers (faculty, students,

entrepreneurs, public service, etc.), and a White Paper on classifying applied geography presentations at the annual AAG meeting will be drafted for circulation this Fall.

- a. All AAG regional groups were contacted, and are aware of the option of contacting Anderson medallists as potential speakers at regional conferences. I will re-send the communication in late April or early May for information purposes. In addition to that approach, the Board might wish to use a “bottom up” initiative and suggest in the AGSG Newsletter that members of the AGSG propose to the regional boards that an Anderson medallist be invited as a keynote speaker to discuss an applied geography issue, topic, matter, etc.
- b. Initial contacts reveal a difference as to how to best find out what medalists have been doing, are doing, could be doing, etc., and tying those findings into something that would be productive for current and future generations of applied geographers. This is a difficult row to hoe, but I expect to have a preliminary report ready by the Fall, and an overview paper ready for the AAG 2010 meetings.
- c. Concerns have been raised in recent years about the descriptors attached to AAG conference presentations, and in particular those that purport to be applied but are not, and those that seem to be applied but are not included in the applied listing. I have been in contact with people in government, business, and academe about the keyword search task, and it has proven to be very illuminating in many respects, but has not yet led to a set of parameters to initiate a serious, directed discussion about how to classify applied geography papers. However, I am optimistic that I will have a preliminary report ready by late Fall, and a “White Paper” that could be posted on the AGSG website in February 2010, and in time for the 2010 meetings.
- d. The applied geography theme was added to Canada’s 2008 GAW, and I expect that it will take a year or two for the idea to take hold. This is an initiative that will likely work best if the AGSG launches a similar program in the U.S., since it appears clear that real progress in applied geography requires a lot of effort among a mix of promoters. I note that I have used CAGlist to get out the word in Canada about the Applied and GeoSkills Showcases, and that a list serve approach by the AGSG would help to get out the word in the U.S., That said, a cross-reference to the Applied Geography Showcase url would be an appropriate way to recognize that the Showcase was launched under the aegis of the CAG, and it might be a way to promote cross-fertilization among Canadian and U.S. applied geographers. The url for the CAG’s Applied Geography Showcase is [http://www.cag-acg.ca/files/pdf/GAW/Applied\\_Final.pdf](http://www.cag-acg.ca/files/pdf/GAW/Applied_Final.pdf).
- e. To date no funds have been expended from the assigned allocation of \$2000.00. It is my expectation that funds will be expended in 2009-2010.

7. Financial Report: Provided by AAG as of February 28, 2009.

Balance as of August 31, 2007 was	\$8,545.54
Balance as of August 31, 2008 was	\$9,473.15
Dues collected Sept 2008-February 2009	\$938.00
Balance as of February 28, 2009	\$10,411.15

*Prepared by Dr. Nairne Cameron in conjunction with Dr. Sonya Glavac. Based on a 2008 Annual Report prepared by Mr. Ed Butterworth.*

*April 30, 2009*

***Minutes of the Meeting of the Applied Geography Specialty Group (AGSG)  
Wednesday, April 16, 2008 at the AAG Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts***

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**Present:** Ed Butterworth (Chair), Sonya Glavac (Vice Chair), Nairne Cameron (Secretary/Treasurer), Barry Wellar (Anderson Award Committee), Dave Clark, Nancy K. Torrieri (US Census Bureau), Cavan Capps (US Census Bureau), Mindy Butterworth.

**1. *Opening Business***

Ed Butterworth opened the meeting and participants introduced themselves.

**2. *Chair's Report***

Ed had circulated the Group's Annual Report prior to the meeting. A couple of modifications were requested. Sonya Glavac asked that her affiliation be changed to Arizona State University and Dave Clark requested that his affiliation be altered to read University of California Davis and California Department of Transportation. Barry Wellar is planning to submit some additional notes on the Anderson Award. Nairne will coordinate these alterations and will re-circulate the report to the board.

Action Item #1: Nairne Cameron will modify the Annual Report, and will re-circulate the report for approval following the conference.

***Membership***

Ed Butterworth reported that the AGSG had 301 members of which 188 are students paying reduced dues and 121 are non-students paying full dues. The main causes for the membership decline from the previous period include an AAG policy to charge \$1 dues for student membership and AGSG failure to convert students graduating to academia and workforce to full membership and attract new members to offset the membership turnover rate. Nairne Cameron suggested that we review our membership, in particular the non-student category, to gain a better understanding of our existing members. Then, we can investigate ways of engaging our members more actively in the specialty group. Also, it would be better to reach our members through their individual email addresses, rather than the AAG discussion forum. Nairne Cameron will inquire about obtaining our members' email addresses so that we can compile a broadcast email list.

Action Item #2: Nairne Cameron will obtain and review our current membership list, and acquire the email addresses for our members. The AGSG Secretary can then maintain a broadcast email list for all our members.

**3. *Specialty Group Network News***

Ed Butterworth attended the Specialty Group Chairs' meeting at the conference. He suggested that we could potentially collaborate with two newly created specialty groups: Business Specialty and Cyber Infrastructure. Also, our group might be able to liaison with "stand-alone geographers". These are academic geographers who work at universities without a geography department.

The AAG has created a Developing Regions Program, whereby for a reduced fee of \$20, geographers from developing countries can become involved with the Association. The AAG would like to see regular members partner with these geographers.

John Agnew, the new AAG President is promoting “integrated geography”, where physical and human geographers work together on projects. Ed suggested that our group may be able to assist. Regarding AAG journals, the publisher, Routledge will be offering online copies instead of paper versions.

The Specialty Group Chairs also discussed the difficulty for members to participate in all their specialty groups meetings, due to the concurrent scheduling of the meetings. One possibility is to arrange morning meetings starting at 7am. Another option is to contact Oscar Larsen to arrange specialty meetings at specific times. Ed suggested that the AGSG have a web meeting prior to the conference to finalize business matters, which would open the way for a more engaging meeting at the conference.

#### **4. *Anderson Award***

Barry Wellar paid for three AAG Awards Luncheon tickets for himself, Michael Sutcliffe, and Marilyn Brown, for a total of \$135. He was also arranging a breakfast with Marilyn Brown and the Lecture Discussant, which will cost around \$60, for a total disbursement of about \$200. Next year in Las Vegas, he would also like to set aside a budget of approximately \$150-200 for similar expenses.

Barry thought Ed’s idea to have the Anderson Award winners present at regional AAG meetings was a very good one. Barry will propose the idea to former Anderson medalists to gauge their willingness to participate.

Barry had another idea of creating a section on our website asking: “*What are the Anderson medallists doing now?*” Barry will try to find out what the medalists are doing and then post their descriptions on the website. Prior to the meeting, Seth Marcus, our website director, was asking for biographical information on Anderson medallists, so perhaps Barry can make these biographical requests at the same time.

*Budget: \$1K for first year, after that would go down (\$200)*

Another project that Barry proposed was to derive criteria for defining “applied geography” research. The project entitled “Design of a Keyword Search Procedure at the AAG Meetings” would be designed to get a handle on how much applied work is actually being presented at AAG meetings. Criteria will be developed for classifying applied geography papers. Some presentations are just applications, not client-driven applied geography. Other presentations may not be classified as applied, but in fact may indeed have a strong client-driven approach. Barry will be contacting Anderson medalists for their assistance in developing these criteria. There are plans to search the 2008, then 2007, 2006, 2005, and 2009 CDs for applied geography keywords, then classify the relevant presentations.

*Budget: \$1K (40 hours @ \$25/hour for a graduate student)*

For the last two years, Barry has been the Media Director for the Canadian Association of Geographers' Geography Awareness Week (GAW). For 2007 a theme days approach was introduced, and the selected themes were Weather and Climate, Water, GIS, Transportation, and Food and Health. Ten non-academic websites were identified for each theme day. The Canadian Association of Geographers website provided web links for the chosen sites that had material on their particular theme, combined with a spatial dimension. For 2008 an applied geography theme will be added to the Canadian GAW program, and the initial emphasis will be on contacting all departments, agencies, and firms that are members of the Canadian Association of Geographers. Barry proposed that AGSG adopt a similar approach for U.S., by adding a section to our website with links to applied geography material that could be posted by U.S. geography departments, firms, agencies etc., that are affiliated with the AGSG. We would have to send out a note to the departments, firms, agencies, etc., requesting them to send us their links, which may challenge certain departments to include applied geography in their programs. Barry will be proceeding to draft a letter. No AGSG expenditure is anticipated for this project.

Ed made a motion to allocate \$2,000 to Barry Wellar for undertaking the above Anderson award projects. Nairne Cameron seconded the motion, and all board members were in favour.

Sonya then made a motion providing the Anderson Committee with \$200-\$250 per year for hospitality expenses. Nancy Torrieri seconded the motion. All board members were in favour.

Action Item #3: Barry Wellar will be proceeding with the initiatives listed above. Dave Clark will authorize the disbursement of funds, copying all correspondence to Sonya Glavac.

### **5. Student Competition**

Next, we reviewed the student paper competition. Mindy Butterworth who coordinated the competition this year reported that 5 or 6 students sent in abstracts but none of these initial entrants sent in a final paper. For this reason, no prizes were awarded in this year's competition.

To remedy the low participation rate, Barry Wellar suggested soliciting Anderson Award medal winners to in turn ask assistant professors to motivate their students to enter the competition. We also discussed identifying and recruiting a new professor who could manage the competition. Ed Butterworth will be the interim project coordinator and will advertise for a successor in our next newsletter and on the AGSG website. Barry Wellar also offered his support.

We will be setting the topic for the competition to simplify the contest, and will be recycling last year's theme – "Pedestrian Safety", which usually encompasses the fields of transport, public health and climate. However, almost any geographic domain can make a unique and meaningful contribution to the theme. To be considered "applied" geography, the research must have an identifiable client.

Students may not be motivated to enter the contest unless a substantial prize will be awarded. We discussed increasing the award amount to \$1K for the separate Ph.D. and Master's competitions, and potentially also increasing the undergraduate award. To sustain the competition awards at this level in future years, we will need to find sponsors.

To be eligible for the competition, entrants must be students (either full-time or part-time) as confirmed in writing by a faculty member.

Action Item #4: Barry Wellar will contact previous Anderson Award medal members to ask for their help. Ed Butterworth will advertise for a competition manager.

## **6. Elections**

Prior to the meeting, Sonya Glavac became AGSG Chair and Nairne Cameron was voted in as Vice Chair. Ed Butterworth will serve as Past Chair. And, Seth Marcus is happy to continue as manager of our website for another year. At the meeting, Barry Wellar indicated that he is willing to continue as the Head of the Anderson Award Committee for at least another 1 to 2 years. Dave Clark volunteered to serve as Treasurer. The board commended Mindy Butterworth on the wonderful newsletter that she created, and was pleased that Mindy agreed to stay on next year as our newsletter editor. Dr. Nancy Torrieri expressed an interest in becoming a member of our board. Following the meeting, Ed Butterworth nominated a colleague, Ms. Demetra Voyadgis, for the position of secretary if Lucy Stanfield is unable to serve. Our revised board list appears below.

### *AGSG Officers*

*Chair:* Dr. Sonya Glavac, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arizona State University

*Vice Chair:* Dr. Nairne Cameron, Dept. of Geography and Geology, Algoma University College

*Secretary:* Lucy Stanfield, Environmental Protection Agency

*Treasurer:* Mr. Dave Clark, University of California Davis and California Department of Transportation

### *AGSG Directors*

*Past Chair:* Mr. Edwin Butterworth, US Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Topographic Engineering Center

*Anderson Award Committee:* Dr. Barry Wellar, Wellar Consulting

*Web Manager:* Mr. Seth Marcus, US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

*Newsletter Editor:* Ms. Melinda Butterworth, Graduate Student, Virginia Tech

Dr. Michael DeMers, New Mexico State University

Mr. Douglas Heivly, City of Allentown, PA

Dr. Nancy Torrieri, US Census Bureau

Dr. Richard Wright, San Diego State University

Action Item #5: Ed Butterworth to transition his duties to Sonya Glavac. Nairne Cameron to contact the AAG Secretariat regarding Dave Clark's new role as Treasurer, and to

inform Dave Clark about Treasurer duties. Nairne will also relate the duties of Secretary to the new incoming officer. It would be helpful if the new secretary could maintain and circulate a list of all board officers and directors (including affiliations, phone numbers, and email addresses).

### **7. *US Census Initiative***

Nancy Torrieri and Cavan Capps of the US Census Bureau attended the meeting to propose collaboration with the AGSG in showcasing the Bureau's data and online tools to potential users (such as universities, small towns, and states). The Census Bureau has long been known for its role in collecting and processing census data and making it available to the public. The Bureau has enlarged its capacity, as is also a data warehouse, bringing in data from many other sources.

Barry Wellar urged the AGSG board members to quickly take up this opportunity with the Bureau, making our group the hub for outreach on this initiative.

We discussed hosting a conference session that would explore how users are applying the online tools and analyzing the data. Cavan Capps will be forwarding the AGSG a document outlining the Bureau's resources. We can then promote the Bureau's offerings through an article in our newsletter and also on our Specialty Group website.

*Action Item #6:* Cavan Capps will send a list of US Census Bureau resources to the AGSG Board. Seth Marcus can then post the material on our website and Mindy Butterworth can include a reference in the AGSG newsletter.

### **8. *Adjournment***

Ed Butterworth adjourned the meeting.

*Minutes prepared by Nairne Cameron on April 20, 2008 and revised March 24, 2009.*